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By fragmenting the packets as shown in Figure 2e, a receiving device that is to decapsulate the incoming packet need not cache all fragments or wait until they have all been received before it proceeds to strip the outer header off each inner 5 fragment and sending it along immediately based on the inner IP header.

Among other things, the packet manipulation module 72 analyzes the packet or fragment and determines its size, determines the path MTU from the size, and forwards the path MTU 10 to the receiving broker 58. Alternatively, the packet manipulation module 72 forwards the size to the receiving broker 58, which determines the path MTU. The receiving broker 58 forwards the path MTU to the sending broker 38. The sending broker 52 formulates a policy, including the size of packets to 15 send, based on the path MTU information received from the receiving broker 58. It then forwards this policy to the sending interface device 38 through the remote policy interface 70 of the sending interface device 38. In future communications, data is sent as packets of a size conforming to the policy, and thus 20 should not be fragmented.

The invention may be embodied in the form of hardware, firmware, or software, using a processor and a medium which bears the software. The medium can be a memory, a mass storage device, or a communication channel, among other things. The processor can 25 be part of a computer or other machine that includes a system bus, memory, I/O drivers, and I/O devices.

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